



Whittenton Village Walk Audit Report



Appendix

1) Summary

- a) Walk Audit Map & Route Information
- b) Whittenton Village Summary

2) Findings

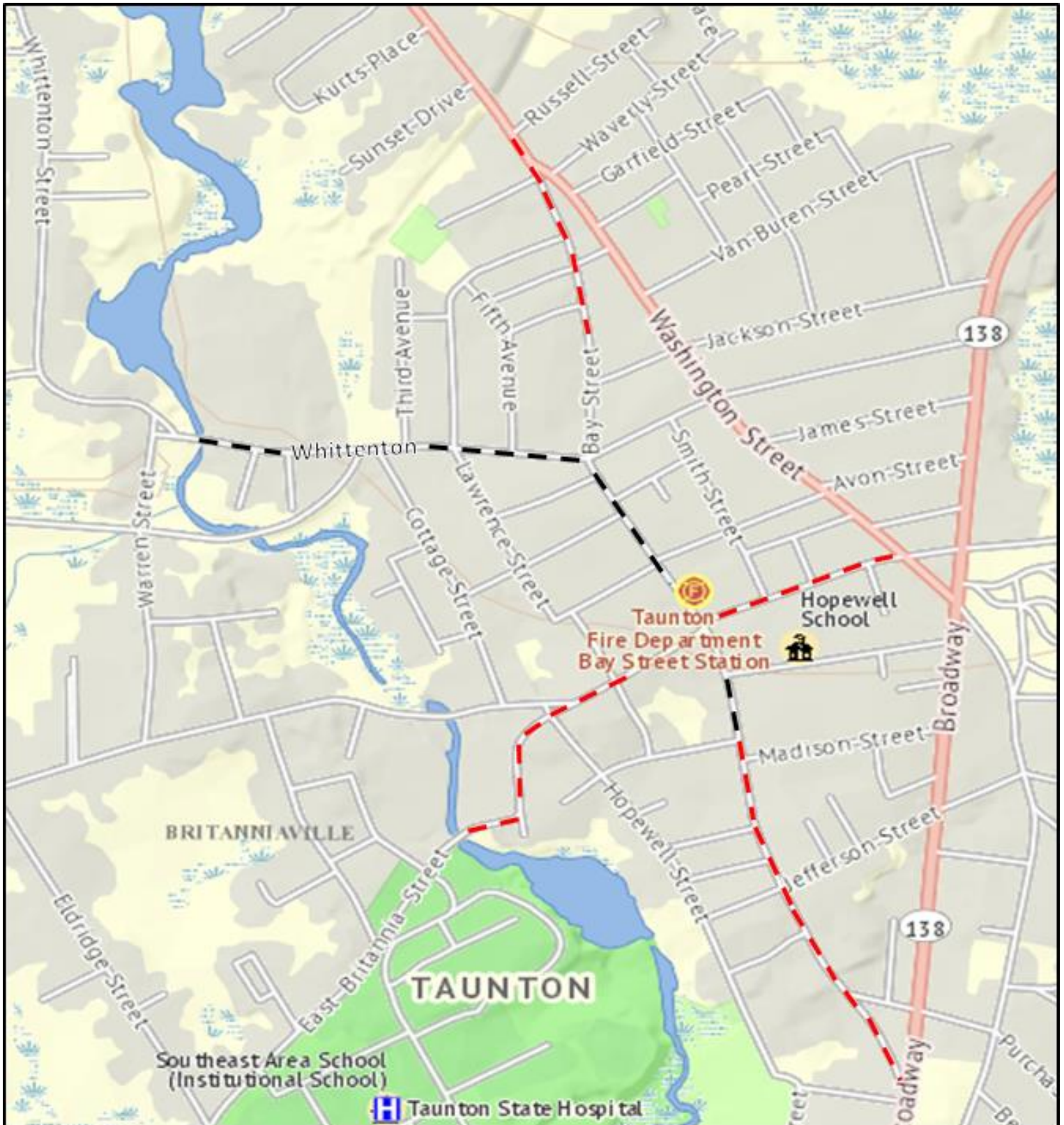
- a) West Bay Street
- b) Whittenton Street
- c) East Bay Street

3) Low-Cost Recommendations

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Whittenton Village Walk Audit Area Map



- Walk Audit Route
- Additional MASSWORKS Grant Project area



Whittenton Village/Walk Audit Area Summary

Demographic Data

Whittenton Village in Taunton is located along Bay Street, situated between Route 138 to the East and the Mill River to the West. The majority of the Whittenton Village walk audit area falls within U.S. Census Tract 6136 for Bristol County, Massachusetts. The U.S. Census Bureau lists the population of this Census area (2010 data) as 3,771 residents which compares to a total of 55,874 for the City of Taunton. The Racial and Ethnic background for this Census area can be seen in the chart below, indicating it is just slightly more diverse than the City as a whole. The census area also had a median age of 36.7, which is slightly lower than median ages at the Bristol County, State, and National levels.

Race and Ethnic Population (2010 Estimates): Taunton vs Whittenton Village (Census Tract 6136)				
Race/Ethnic Groups	Taunton		Whittenton Village	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	55,874		3,771	
White	48,742	87.2	3,233	85.7
Black	2773	5	217	6
American Indian	142	0.3	10	0.3
Asian	560	1	9	0.2
Hawaiian/Pacific Is.	25		1	
Other	3632	6.5	301	8
Hispanic	3058	5.5	257	6.8

Housing Stock & Types of Developments

There are roughly 1,732 total housing units in the Whittenton Village walk audit area. There are currently plans to add an additional 45 housing units within the area; and also the potential for an additional 400-500 additional units should the mills along the Mill River be converted into housing space. These numbers only underscore the need for adequate pedestrian-friendly pathways and improvement projects within the Whittenton Village area.

Whittenton Village is also home to a number of businesses and community services. There is a Taunton Fire Department Station, Mechanics Bank, Whittenton Hardware, Whittenton House of Pizza, Regal Liquors and Food Mart (and many more locations) all located just a short walk away from each other along Bay Street. Heading West down Whittenton Street you will find old mill complexes, a Church, and a few local businesses. These are just some examples of the goods and services that are found in the area, all of which can be accessed by walking or biking.

Walk Audit Findings

West Bay Street

The walk audit began at the parking lot of Regal Liquors and Food mart, on the West side of Bay Street heading North toward Whittenton Street. Bay Street is a two lane road with vehicles traveling North and South, and both lanes are relatively wide. The sidewalks on the West side of the street are as well. For the most part, the sidewalks are in fine condition, with relatively no tripping hazards or uneven footing.

At the intersection of Bay Street and State Street, curb cuts are present, but a crosswalk is noticeably missing. Adding even just a simple crosswalk could improve visibility of pedestrians possibly crossing as vehicles approach this intersection. The sidewalks around the curb cut are cracked and not in quite the condition that the remainder of sidewalks are, but still do not pose much of a tripping or fall hazard. On the North Side of State Street, there is significant brush overgrowth surrounding the fire hydrant, which is aesthetically not pleasing, and could serve as a potential trip hazard.



West Bay Street sidewalks facing North

As you approach Whittenton Street from Bay Street, you come to a large four way intersection. This intersection features curbs with very large radii and wide turns. Crosswalks and curb cuts exist at all four points of the intersection and are in decent condition. There are no stop signs on Bay Street heading North or South. There are stop signs on both the Whittenton Street sides of the intersection, set back about 20 feet from their respective street corners. Because the curb radii are so large, vehicles often stop and pull directly into the crosswalk area to get a better sense of oncoming traffic from Bay Street. These wide turns also encourage speeding, as tighter turns require drivers to slow down.



State Street Overgrowth



Whittenton & Bay Street Intersection
Large radii and cars in crosswalk



Bay and State St – Missing Crosswalk

Walk Audit Findings

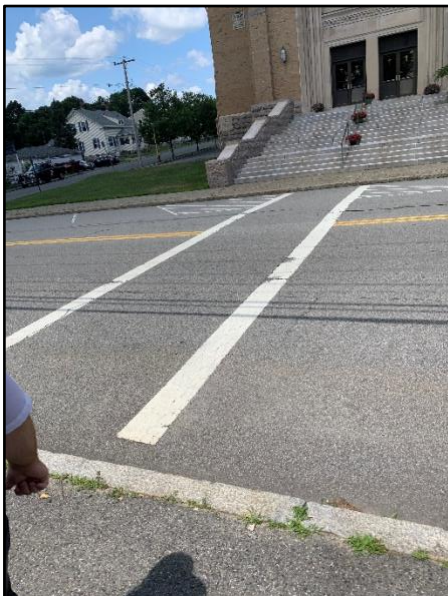
Whittenton Street

Whittenton Street is another wide-lane road. The walk audit route along Whittenton stretched from the Bay Street intersection down to the Mill River crossing. Starting down Whittenton heading West, the sidewalks are in fine condition, but slightly narrow considering the large width of the Street. As you arrive in front of St. Jude's Parish, there is a visibly painted crosswalk, which lacks curb cuts. This adds an extra layer of danger for pedestrians, as they already have to navigate that crossing as vehicles pull perpendicular into the parking spaces in front of the Church. Continuing down to the intersection of Whittenton and Lawrence Street, the sidewalks on both sides also lack curb cuts.

The sidewalks past Lawrence St continue to be in adequate shape on Whittenton until you get to the intersection with Cottage Street near the rail road right of way. Here, the sidewalk ends and becomes a grassy patch. During the time of the walk audit, a utility vehicle was seen parked directly on the path forward, which forces pedestrians onto the street. The remainder of Whittenton Street heading West is in adequate shape up until the Mill River crossing.



Whittenton Street heading West



**Lack of curb cuts in front of
St. Jude's Parish**



**Lack of curb cuts at
Whittenton and Lawrence St**



**Sidewalk ends near RR right of way
Utility truck blocking path**

Walk Audit Findings

East Bay Street

Once at the Mill River Crossing, the walk audit group turned around, and headed East on Whittenton back towards Bay St. At Third Avenue, there is no stop sign slowing down traffic trying to pull onto Whittenton Street, causing a possibly dangerous scenario for both pedestrians and vehicular collisions. There are curb cuts at Fourth Avenue, but after that intersection, the walking space narrows greatly with utility poles and overgrowth crowding the sidewalk. This would force wheelchair users to take to the street with vehicular traffic coming directly at them, less having to cross Bay Street multiple times back and forth to avoid these obstacles.

Back at the Bay Street and Whittenton Street four way intersection, the walk audit crossed over to the East side of Bay Street. Traffic from all sides of the intersection flowed smoothly, and crossing was relatively easy. Heading South on Bay Street, the sidewalks were very narrow, and there were multiple points where two people side by side could barely fit past a utility pole or overgrowth. At Pulaski Square, at the intersection of Bay and East/West Britannia, the crosswalks are faded. The South side of this intersection also lacks curb cuts.

Past East/West Britannia Streets, the sidewalks on East Bay are in terrible shape. There are numerous breaks in the pavement, and elevation changes from raised or cracked sidewalk. These create serious tripping hazards, especially where the sidewalks are narrow and hard to get through in general. This continued all the way down Bay Street until the walk audit turned around between Madison and Monroe Streets.



Narrow sidewalks and overgrowth



"3 Corners" intersection crossing Bay St



Narrow sidewalks and frequent utility poles

Recommendations

Low Cost

Many of the crosswalks could use repainting. In order to increase visibility of the crosswalks, installing “zebra stripe” or “piano key” styles helps vehicles identify crosswalk locations and slow down more readily. Using paint is low cost and it can be an effective strategy.



Creating bike lanes, especially on very wide roads like Bay St and Whittenton Street, not only gives bikers a safer space to ride but also helps create a safer environment for pedestrians and motorists alike. Pedestrians will have an additional buffer from traffic. Using bike lanes, sharrows, or additional painted “fog lines” to narrow the road without large infrastructure projects is yet another for effective low cost improvements.



Recommendations

Larger Scale Projects



Numerous spots along the walk audit route were missing curb cuts. Locations like Lawrence Street, the Four Corners intersection (West Britannia/East Britannia and Bay Street), and others listed previously would all greatly benefit from state of the art curb cuts. Not only do they make intersections safer for people of all abilities, but also reduce tripping hazards and make pedestrians more visible. Smooth sidewalks free from any protrusions or changes in elevation also provide a much safer pedestrian friendly area. Improving these pieces of infrastructure could dramatically increase the walkability of the Whittenton Village area, leading to increases in property values, economic development, and possibly much more.

Walk Audit Attendees:

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